



**INTERGROUP
ON THE WELFARE
& CONSERVATION
OF ANIMALS**

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Established in 1983

Mr Gianluca Galletti

Ministro dell'Ambiente, della Tutela del Territorio e del Mare

Via Cristoforo Colombo, n. 44, 00147

Roma,

Italia

Brussels, 10 November 2015

Dear Minister Galletti,

In recent years, there has been increasing doubt about the ethics of using live animals for public entertainment and this is reflected in the national legislation of an increasing number of states in Europe and across the world. In fact, 16 European countries have already adopted a total or partial ban on using wild animals in circuses. A 2010 government consultation in United Kingdom found that 94% of the public supported a ban on wild animal acts in England and Wales; and the recent consultation in Scotland in 2014 produced 98% support for a ban. This clearly demonstrates that public support for transporting wild animals in the back of lorries around towns and cities to show them off to people is long gone.

The European Parliament's Intergroup on the Welfare and Conservation of Animals - convening more than 100 Members of the European Parliament - urges governments in all member states where wild animals are still used in circuses to introduce modern, 21st century legislation to end these outmoded entertainments.

Wild animals in circuses are bought and sold, prematurely separated from their mothers and then from companions, confined or chained and forced to stand for hours and frequently moved in small compartments on trains or trucks. They are required to perform behaviours never seen in nature. The circus experience has nothing to do with the reality of the wild animals' life and behaviour. Wild animals that have been bred for tens of generations in captivity still show extremely high motivation to perform the behaviour typical of their wild counterparts. Scientifically proven welfare effects of the circus life on wild animals have been summarized in the attached statement, co-signed by many eminent University professors, ethologists and veterinarians, clearly demonstrating that wild animals are not suited to a circus life. Similar arguments have been stated in position papers recently published by the Federation of Veterinarians of Europe and the Amboseli Trust for Elephants.

In addition, reports by RSPCA and TRAFFIC Europe note the prevalence in circuses of species which are subject to the controls of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES). Controls for welfare, health or wildlife trade and possession are difficult to exercise, given that circuses are not only on the move much of the time, but that sometimes they also change their names and the acts they employ.

Finally, experience shows that the use of wild animals in circuses represents a serious threat to public security, as it regularly leads to accidents involving animal tamers, circus employees and public.

Therefore, the Intergroup for the Welfare and Conservation of the Animals urges you to ban the use of wild animals in circuses in your country: we have the responsibility to show our children that such magnificent animals should be treated with respect and empathy, leaving them in the wild, not forcing them into an unnatural existence which includes significant physical and emotional suffering.

Yours sincerely,

Janusz Wojciechowski MEP